



NEWS RELEASE

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STEPTOE ANNOUNCES FUNDING OPPORTUNITY FOR RESEARCH ON THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COOPERATIVES

Morgantown, WV – July 31, 2006: Rural Development State Director Robert M. Steptoe, III, today announced the availability of \$495,000 nationwide in competitive cooperative agreement funds for fiscal year 2006 to conduct research on the national economic impact of all types of cooperatives. USDA Rural Development hereby requests proposals from institutions of higher education interested in applying for a competitively awarded cooperative research agreement. The intent of the funding is to encourage research on the critical issue of the economic value of cooperatives.

Interested parties may submit completed applications no later than August 30, 2006, to be eligible for fiscal year 2006 funding. Applicants may obtain application forms, guides, and materials for the cooperative agreement at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/reic.htm> or by contacting USDA Rural Development at (202) 690-0368 (TDD: 800.877-8339) and ask for the cooperative research agreement application kit.

For further information and application guidelines, please visit the July 31, 2006 Federal Register at: <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20061800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2006/E6-12166.htm>.

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Further information on USDA Rural Development may be obtained by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>. In West Virginia, call 1-800-295-8228 to be put in touch with the appropriate personnel serving your county. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202.720.2600 (voice and TDD).

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